

The Downfall of Licinius

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no more than twenty months old. These appointments are important, for they shew how completely the system of Diocletian had broken down. The Emperors appointed t'csars out of deference to the letter of that constitution, but they outrageously violated its spirit by appointing their own sons, and when the choice fell on an infant, insult was added to injury. It was a plain warning to all the world that Constantine and Licinius meant to keep power *in* their own hands. When, a few years later, three sons were born to Constantine and Fausta in quick succession, the eldest, who was given the name of his father, was created C'sar shortly after his birth. No doubt the Empress --herself an Emperor's daughter demanded that her son should enjoy equal rank with the son of the low-born Minervina, but the probabilities are that Constantine already looked forward to providing the young Princes with patrimonies carved out of the territory of Licinius. However, there was no actual rupture between the two Emperors until 323, though relations had long been strained.

We know comparatively little of what took place in the intervening years. They were not, however, years of unbroken peace. There was fighting both on the Danube and the Rhine. The Goths and the Sarmatians, who had been taught such a severe lesson by Alaric and Aetius that they had left the Danubian frontier undisturbed for half a century, fought over Moesia and Illyria. We hear of several Italic battles along the banks of the river, and then, when Con-